WARNING. . .

MASSIVE VOLTSTRIKE. . .

NEG-COLLECTOR OVERLOAD. . . LIFE STASIS FIELD COMPROMISED. . . ALERT HOMEGATE. . .

VZZAK-A-DOOM!

NEG-COLLECTOR TOP PRIORITY. . . REROUTE POWER. . .

LIFE STASIS FIELD DISCONNECTING. . .

MOVEMENT DETECTED IN STASIS CHAMBER. . . ALERT HOMEGATE. . .

WOTTA WE *WAITIN'* FOR? LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE *ROAD!*

ONE--

REPEAT: MOVEMENT DETECTED. . .

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--GET HERE? MY QUESTION EXACTLY, SUE.

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY THE *NEGATIVE ZONE*, BUT--

NO, REED. I WAS WONDERING--

--WHERE'S *ANNIHILUS*, RIGHT, SUZIE? WE WAS MIXIN' IT WITH *HIM*, LAST I REMEMBER.

'COURSE, THINGS'RE KINDA *FUZZY* IN MY HEAD...

LIKE THAT'S *DIFFERENT*?

HEY-- LOOK OVER *HERE*!

GOOD *EYES*, JOHNNY! THIS COULD BE AN IMPORTANT *CLUE* TO WHAT *HAPPENED* TO US!

EXCUSE ME!

HASN'T ANYONE *ELSE* NOTICED WE'RE WEARING *TOTALLY DIFFERENT UNIFORMS*?!

ACTUALLY... I *HADN'T*, SUE. ONE THING AT A TIME.

HMM. DEAD. NOT A ZONE-NATIVE...

TERRAN? THAT'S HIGHLY UN--

WHAT'S *THIS* DEVICE...?

LISSEN, SUZY, I DON'T LIKE BEIN' DRESSED UP LIKE SOME *DOLL* ANY MORE'N *YOU*--SEEIN' AS HOW I'M THE SHY TYPE AN' ALL--

--BUT MEBBE WE'LL GET SOME ANSWERS REAL *SOON*...

VROOM!

VROOM!

...'CAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE WE GOT *COMPANY*!

ZZZURRENDER, HUMAN!

THERE IZZ NO ZZZAPING THE WRATH OF THE ZZZAR OF THE NEGATIVE ZZONE!

VTOOM!

YEAH? WELL, I'M FROM MISERY, BUGS-- SHOW ME!

VROOM!!

ONLY WAY I'LL GO BACK TO YOUR DIMENSIONAL GULAG IS--

WHAT THE SHOCK?

THINGS A LITTLE TOO HOT FOR YOU? ALLOW--

--ME--

Ohhh SHOCK!

THAMM!

DON'T WORRY, MISS.

JOHNNY -- HER PURSUERS?

FWOOOSH!

ALREADY HOT-FOOTING IT *OUT* OF HERE, BIG BROTHER-IN-LAW!

HOW'S OUR DAINTY--

--ANOTHER STEP AND YOU FREAKS'RE SHOCKIN' MARKED FOR *NELCORD*, YOU *GOT* THAT?!

--DAMSEL IN DISTRESS?

I'D SAY SHE'S A BIT... *STRESSED* BY THE SITUATION, JOHNNY. I'LL TURN *INVISIBLE* AND--

--SCARE HER EVEN *MORE*.

I THINK THE *PROBLEM* IS SHE DOESN'T BELIEVE WE'RE THE *REAL* FANTASTIC FOUR.

READ ME *FIRST*! THE *PROBLEM* HERE IS YOU'RE--

--YOU'RE--

--YOU'RE MY *HERO*!

THAT'S A HOMEGATE KEY, RIGHT?

TWIST WELL, IT IS ODDLY SIMILAR TO MY OWN PORTAL LOCATOR DESIGN...

I CAN IMAGINE.

HMM. I HAD HOPED TO INVESTIGATE OUR SITUATION HERE A BIT MORE... BUT YOUR SAFETY IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT, MISS--?

OH, TAKE ME WITH YOU-- PLEASE! IF I DON'T GET ZONE-FREE THOSE BUGS'LL FIND ME, AND--

CHIMERA. THANKS, MR.--?

--REED! I CAN'T FOLLOW THESE INSTRUMENTS!

JUST KEEP THE INDICATOR GREEN, JOHNNY-- THAT MEANS WE'RE ON THE HOMING BEACON.

SHOULD BE ENTERING THE DISTORTION ZONE SOON...

WELL... FANTASTIC, TO SOME. BUT PLEASE CALL ME--

HE SAYS IT--IT HAPPENS!

YOU'RE FANTASTIC, MISTER! Hee Hee!

AWW-- THIS PART'S WORSE'N THE COMEY ISLAND CYCLONE!

I NEED SOLID GROUND AN' A BROMO!

A FEW SECONDS, OLD FRIEND. WE'RE PHASE-SHIFTING BACK INTO THE POSITIVE UNIVERSE NOW...

GET READY TO FLAME-OFF, JOHNNY. WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE GETTING HURT DURING--

--RE-ENTRY?

OH, *THIS* IS INTERESTING...

LET ME GUESS. THE ENTIRE KREE ARMY JUST *HAPPENED* TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND--

WELL, IT SURE AIN'T OUR *CLEANIN' SERVICE*, SUZIE!

THEY DON'T COME PACKIN' BUCK ROGERS RAY-GUNS-- *USUALLY!*

'CEPT THAT *ONCE*.

MY LAB!

WHAT HAPPENED TO MY LAB--?

YOUR LAB?

YES, I SUPPOSE YOU *WOULD* THINK THAT! WELL--*TIMES CHANGE!*

GUARDS! RETAIN THESE... *ESCAPED SUBJECTS!*

BZZOK! BZZOK!

I'D SAY THEY DEFINE "RETAIN" QUITE *UNIQUELY.*

I WASN'T LISTENING TO THEIR *WORDS*, REED--I WAS WATCHING THEIR *EYES.*

NO!

CHILL, CHIMERA! HAVEN'T YOU EVER HEARD OF MY SISTER'S INVISIBLE *FORCE FIELD?*

KRAKK!

WELL THERE'S *ONE THING* SHE'S GONNA HEAR LOUD AN' CLEAR--AN' THAT'S *ME!*

'CAUSE IT'S CLOB--

BEN--NO!

DON'T DESTROY THAT STRANGE EQUIPMENT--I WANT TO *STUDY* IT LATER!

LET THE BUILDING'S *AUTOMATED DEFENSES* HANDLE THIS!

YA MEAN THE SAME HIGH-TECH-TYPE SECURITY STUFF THAT LET THESE STAR WARS REJECTS IN TA *BEGIN* WITH?

THEY MUST'VE SHUT THE SYSTEM *DOWN* SOMEHOW, BUT THIS MANUAL OVER-RIDE WILL--

INTRUDER ALERT... INTRUDER ALERT...

--REMEDY *EVERYTHING!*

FIVE UNREGISTERED LIFEFORMS DETECTED...

CHUNK!

UH-OH!

APPREHEND...

YEAH--THIS IS *LOTS* BETTER, STRETCHO!

SSSHUNK!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! HOW CAN THE COMPUTER *NOT* RECOGNIZE US?

SKEK

TOLD YA NOT TA USE OUR *DRIVER'S LICENSE* PHOTOS TA I.D. US!

THAT'S NOT IT, BEN--THE SYSTEM'S BEEN *REPROGRAMMED!* BUT THAT SHOULD'VE TAKEN A TEAM OF TOP HACKERS *MONTHS.*

WELL *WE* DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF TIME, REED-- THIS SYSTEM WILL KEEP LAUNCHING *NEW* ATTACKS UNTIL WE ARE CAPTURED!

BEN-- HEAD *SOUTH!*

C'MON, CHIMERA-- WE'RE *OUTTA* HERE!

SCAN *AHEAD,* PEOPLE-- YOU'RE UP AGAINST A *WALL!*

BZZOOM!

BZZOW!

WALL?

WHAT WALL?

KRAANG!

INTRUDERS NOW IN HANGAR . . . REPEAT. . . INTRUDERS NOW IN—

--NOW IN THE FANTASTICAR!

LET'S MOVE, PEOPLE!

REED--THEY MIGHT'VE GOTTEN TO THIS COMPUTER, TOO--

ALREADY BYPASSING THE NORMAL CIRCUITS, SUE...

WHAT ARE ALL OF YOU--HIGH-POWERED MEGACORP MERCS?

NO. JUST YOUR AVERAGE FAMILY.

'SCUSE ME! CHIMERA--GOTTA FLAME-ON AND FLY INTERFERENCE!

LET'S GET IF WE'RE GOIN'! STRETCH.

OR YA WANT I SHOULD GET OUT AN' PUSH?

GEE, WE MIGHT HAVE TO LEAVE YOU BEHIND THEN, BENJI--

--BUT DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU!

WORRY ABOUT THE HANGAR DOOR, JOHNNY! WHILE ON MANUAL, WE CAN'T OPEN IT BY REMOTE!

THERE!

FIRE AT WILL!

MAXIMUM REGTRAINT!

BZZOK!

BZZAK!

BZZOK!

BZZOK!

YEAH...?

FWSHOOM!

WHAT'S YOUR *POINT*, SIS?

SAVE THE *GRANDSTANDING*, LITTLE BROTHER -- THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT OUR ARMORED FRIENDS MIGHT HAVE WAITING FOR US --

--OUTSIDE?

REED?

I *SEE* IT, SUE.

GOOD LORD -- WHAT HAPPENED TO *NEW YORK*?

WHERE ARE WE? THE FUTURE...?

OH, NO-- IT'S STILL 2099!

WELL, AIN'T THAT GOOD NEWS! WON'T THOSE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC JOKERS BE SURPRISED WHEN I SHOW UP FOR ALL THEM BACK ISSUES OF MY LIFETIME SUBSCRIPTION!

UM... I'M MISSING DATA HERE-- HOW LONG WERE YOU FOUR ZONED?

LONGER THAN WE THOUGHT.

JOHNNY-- YOU BETTER FLAME OFF. I DON'T THINK WE WANT TO ATTRACT ANY UNNECESSARY ATTENTION RIGHT NOW...

YEAH, WELL, OKAY...

HEY! LOOK WHAT I FOUND-- AN EMPTY SEAT!

AND LOOK WHAT I FOUND!

HUH?

PRETTY FUNNY, CHIMERA-- THE FF'S FLARE GUN! THAT'S LIKE, ANCIENT BY NOW!

HA! HA! THINK IT STILL WORKS?

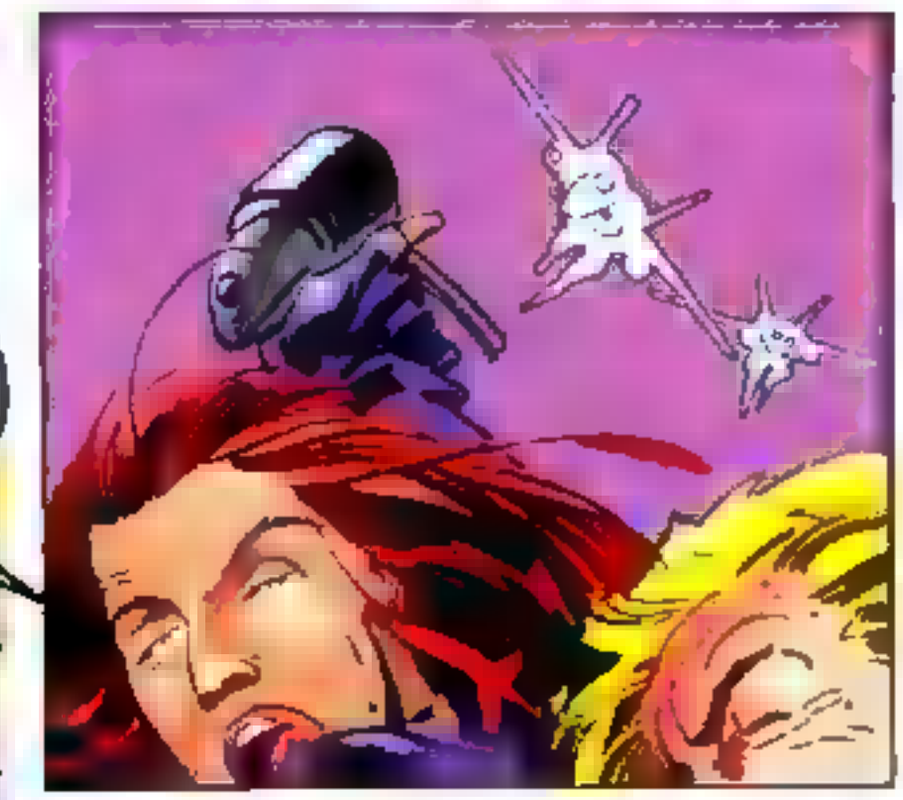
OH, YEAH-- SURE! Y'KNOW, YOU REALLY KILL ME, CHIMERA!

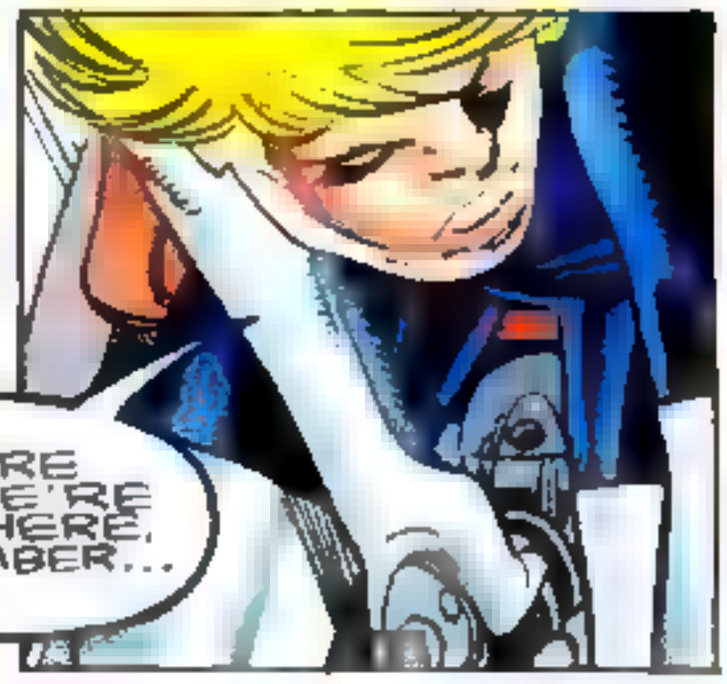
MAYBE...

AUNT PETUNIA'S PICK-UP TRUCK! NOW WHAT?!

STARK-FUJI! FLYBOYS! SEARCH AND DESTROY UNIT!

SHOCKING FLASH OUT OR WE'RE MELTDOWN!





WHERE TO? WE'RE NEW HERE, REMEMBER...

DIVE INTO DOWNTOWN! BEST WAY TO LOSE THESE GEARHEADS --

VROOM!

PEEL-OUT

PHUNT!

--SECOND BEST WAY!

WHOA---!

SHEESH, GIRL! LEAST YA COULD'A YELLED "FORE!"

...GOTA SPEAK...

GUESS REED MADE THAT THING BETTER THAN I *THOUGHT!*

SHOCKIN' *STRAIGHT* HE DID!

WORD OF *WARNING*, PEOPLE! I CAN'T FLY THROUGH THIS MAZE *AND* PUT UP MY FORCE-FIELD!

AN' IT AIN'T THE BEST TIME TA CHANGE *DRIVERS*, *huh*, SUZIE?

I GET THE *PITCHER!*

AN' *SPEAKIN'* OF PITCHERS--

--LESSEE HOW THESE BUMS HANDLE ONE'A BEN GRIMM'S *FASTBALLS!*

'COURSE I AIN'T LIKE *NOLAN RYAN* WHEN HE WAS WITH THE *METS*...

THWOOM

...BUT THEN THESE GUYS AIN'T NO *BROOKLYN DODGERS*, NEITHER!

I'M *DOWNED!* I'M *DOWNED!*

IT'S UP TO YOU, *RIOT!*

ALWAYS!

WE GOT VISITORS, TORCH!

I SEE 'EM, BEN! FEW BLASTS OF FLAME, AND--

FOOOM

FDOOM

MAN! THESE BETTIES ARE FAST!

FOOOM

UH, SIS? TROMP IT!

FOOOM

FOOOM

KA-OOM

I'M GETTING A LITTLE WORRIED HERE--

"OF COURSE, THE TWEN-CEN VEHICLE HAD NO HOPE OF OUTRUNNING STARK-FUJI'S CROWD-PLEASING BYTE-BOMBS!

"THE FUGITIVES PLUMMETED TO FIERY-- AND SPECTACULAR--DEATH IN THE LOWER REACHES OF NEW YORK'S DOWNTOWN...

...CAPPING OFF ONE OF THE MOST **EXCITING** NEWS DAYS SINCE THE OUSTING OF PRESIDENT **DOOM!**

BUT NOT **HALF** AS EXCITING AS TONIGHT'S SUPER-ULTRA-MEGA-LOTTO'S **WINNING NUMB--**

KTSHH!!

--VIRTUAL REALITY RIGHTS IN CONTENTION BETWEEN **ALCHEMAX** AND **STARK-FUJIKAWA** WITH NEW YORK LAW FAVORING THE **LOCAL** MEGACORP.

MEANWHILE, FLYBOY ACE "RIOT" WINGFOOT'S [redacted]TINA-IMPLANT **VIDEO** OF HIS "FANTASTIC" KILL IS ALREADY ON-LINE--

KTSHH!

FILE PHOTO

--UJIKAWA'S SALVAGE TEAMS ARE CURRENTLY ON-SCENE, REPAIRING THE **DAMAGE**, RETRIEVING THE **BODIES**...

WITH OUR QUICK AND DECISIVE **ACTION** IN THIS CRISIS, VICTORY WAS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION!

AND NOW, THESE SO-CALLED "FANTASTIC FOUR"... **ARE** GONE!

I WONDER...

IF THIS YEAR HAS TAUGHT ME ***ANYTHING***, IT IS SANTAYANA'[redacted] TRUTH--

--"THOSE WHO CANNOT ***REMEMBER*** THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO ***REPEAT*** IT."

IS THIS THE ***REAL*** FANTASTIC FOUR? IT IS AS POINTLESS A QUESTION AS "AM I THE REAL ***DOOM***?"

WHAT DECIDES IS THE ***SPIRIT***...

"...AND IF THESE FOUR HAVE THAT...

"...THEN I AM CERTAIN THEY ARE NOT AS DEAD AS SOME WOULD THINK!..

HEIMDALL'S EYES...

MAYBE TODAY--!

WHAT WE GOT, JAKKO? A COLD ONE?

--FLYBOYS GET ALL THE GLORY-- AND WHAT DO WE GET?

CLEAN-UP! SCRAP DETAIL! WE GET STUCK!

A WARM ONE, KOM--WARM AND IN ONE PIECE!

...I THINK...

SHOCK IT! NOW, JAKKO--NOW WE'RE IN THIS EQUAL, RIGHT?

I MEAN, WE GOT TO FIGURE THE PERCENTAGES HERE! WE GOT TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AND--

KNOCK!

JUST WHAT I WAS THINKIN'!

WE GET FIRST CRACK...

YOU STILL LOOKING FOR THAT DIAMOND-IN-THE-ROUGH, JAKKO? BET YOU EVEN PLAY SUPER-ULTRA-MEGA!

JUST NEED TO WIN ONCE, KOM...

YOU SHOULD'A KNOWN THIS AIN'T THE SAFEST PART OF TOWN, FELLAS!

C'MON, STRETCH--YER PALS AIN'T EXACTLY GONNA WANT OUR AUTOGRAPHS WHEN THEY WAKE UP...

FANTASTIC FORUM

Joey Cavalieri
Editor
Lia Pelosi
Assistant Editor

c/o Marvel Comics
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Out Of My Head

How do you get a letters page in the first issue of a comics magazine? By having a loyal and fanatical following, that's how!

Ever since Lia posted the news on the 2099 board at AOL that we'd be starting this title, we've been getting nothing but congratulations, questions and pleas for previews!

So here it is for real! How do you like us so far? We're dyin' to know! Whether it's about this book, or suggestions for the other stuff we've got cookin', or speculations about the future of our future, you know the address!

Dear 2099ers!

Congratulations on your new title! I must say, the Fantastic Four do seem like a logical choice for a 2099 book, since Doom has been around since the beginning of the 2099 line. And wherever there's Doom, the Fantastic Four are sure to follow!

So what can we expect from this FF? Most readers of Doom see him as a sympathetic character, actually rooting for him most of the time. Will this book cause fans of Doom to rethink their views? Also, will we see Doom showing up in this book and vice-versa? Some overlap between the two books would be nice.

The greatest thing about a new book is waiting to find out the answers to questions like these! I'm sure that with the creative team you have behind this book, we ■■■ all enjoy each month's adventure! Thanks for taking us on another new ride! Until Doom joins the FF, Make Mine Marvel!

Adam T. Cornett
ATCornett@aol.com

Doom's already around, Adam, as you now know. Don't worry, he's most definitely going to be around even more. Especially once he gets back from the time travel tale we've got lined up for him starting in issue #40 of DOOM 2099. Once he gets through with his present and future peregrinations, the world of 2099 won't be the same!

Dear Joey, Lia and all,

Can I regress for a moment and allow myself to be a geekish fanboy for a moment? Because here goes: FF 2099?!! YESSSSSSSSSSSS! This rocks!! This kicks! Ha ha ha ha ha!

Ahem. Yes, yes, yes, I'm oh so happy. I could flame on. We are NOT looking at ■ future version of the team (not that Spidey, X-Men or GR are BAD...they're darn good!), but the actual Reed, Sue, Johnny and Ben! Whoo-hoo! This is the perfect complement for Doom 2099, it will allow the 2099 universe to expand beyond belief (Negative Zone 2099? Hmmm...) and it should be ■ LOAD of fun.

Karl Kesel, WRITER? Ya-hoo! He's one of the few people that gets Kirby stuff right. His FF, I imagine, will rank up there with John Byrne and Walt Simonson. Rick Leonardi, PENCILER? Sniff...I'm going to miss his Spider-Man, and while November's Spider-Man/Spider-Man may be his 'going out with a bang', I'm sure his Fantastic Four will kick butt! Lia Pelosi and Joey Cavalieri, EDITORS? What are you guys, NUTS? Just kidding...

Adam Frey
Abyssquick@aol.com
Southampton, PA

Glad you're as excited as we are about this book, Adam. And glad you like the fact that we kept the team we all know and love. As for Karl, we couldn't agree more. His writing is just wonderful and we couldn't have thought of a better person to write FF 2099.

Hello, Fantastic Two!

Aha! Finally, another title to fill the void left by the casualties of the recent 2099 title implosion. I had thought the Fantastic Four would be the logical choice; I'm certainly looking forward to it.

One question, however: aren't you just a little worried that directly transplanting the original Four from the present-day Marvel Universe to 2099 would violate the oh-so-sage policy of keeping the two universes independent of each other? I always thought that was one of the best things about the future adaptations of today's heroes: that they started at issue #1 with ■ clean slate. Even Doom (another direct transplant), by the end of his first issue, had renounced his twencen identity and made himself solely ■ creature of 2099, fully prepped to make a fresh start. Please don't saddle a promising concept like FF 2099 with a back-breaking load of pre-existing continuity before it even gets started.

I'll give this title the chance it deserves, of course, especially with such an impressive creative team (I must admit I had hoped Rick would be back at Spidey, but it's good to see he's still around). However, it could get tough ■ it gets too bogged down in ■ different century. How 'bout it?

Thanx...later!

Charlie Bonis
Chip3@aol.com

Have no fear, Charlie, we think we can draw the line between giving you ■■■ team we all love, yet not get "bogged down in continuity. The introduction of the team will not affect the separation of current and future Marveldom, but Doom's time travel will! Want to know more? Well, check out ■ NATION 2099 in January and watch for info in the 2099 Bullpen pages!

Dear Joey & Lia,

As a charter reader of Marvel's 2099 comics, I (along with many other fans) continue to wonder what the Mighty Bullpen has in store for the evolution of the "futureverse." Upon the cancellation of many of the titles in the line, I feared the future looked bleak for the heroes ■ 2099 A.D. Who would be the next character to get in on the ever growing 2099 population? Daredevil? Iron Man? Lia's cat?

But then I heard that ■■■ of the two new 2099 books was going to be FANTASTIC FOUR 2099! Only one question: What took you so long? This title will certainly prove to be one of the cornerstones of the 2099 universe.

And with the creative talents of Leonardi ■ Williamson doing the art, FF 2099 will surely be ■ winner!

Congratulations on the genesis of another future Marvel classic!

Geno Seay
genoseay@dnoco.net

It was ■ toss-up between FF and Yage 2099, Geno, but then Lia got another cat and the rivalry was too much ■■ we simplified... Thanks for writing. Let us know what you thought of our first issue!

Next Issue

Okay, here's how it works: Big John Buscema, no stranger to the chronicles of the FF, takes the pencils next ish. Starting with #3, Matt Ryan of X-and WOLVERINE fame pencils there after! Check out your back issues of 2099 UNLIMITED to see what Matt's capable of when he gets cranked up!

As for Karl, he has a ton of surprises in store for issue #2, including the Retro Rocketeers, Total Recall, the gang at Stark/Fujikawa, and a whole handful of 2099 guest stars. Any guesses as to who? Why guess? Just show up!

MARVEL 2099

1

X-NATION 2099

SPECIAL PREVIEW

...BUT SOME, OUT OF HABIT, STAY UNDERGROUND.

THERE HE IS! GET HIM!

C'MERE DOGGY!

TCH TCH COME ON, POOCH!

LEAVE ME ALONE, DORIAN! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!

STUPID, EGG-SUCKING CUR!

YOU ALREADY HURT ME! YOU RAN AWAY!

FASSH!

WHA ROOM

AAAIH

DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS DORIAN!

DON'T MAKE MEEE

EAARRGH!

N 4573-F

6TH OR 7TH GENESIS

STAN LEE PRESENTS
THE FIRST LOOK AT THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS MUTANTS OF 2099, COURTESY OF
TOM PEYER -- WRITER • HUMBERTO RAMOS -- PENCILER
JIMMY PALMIOTTI -- INKER • DAVE SHARPE -- LETTERER
J. BROWN -- COLORIST • MALIBU -- COMPUTER COLOR
JOEY CAVALIERI -- EDITOR • BOBBIE CHASE -- CHIEF

BOYS! GET OVER HERE! WULFF'S IN FULL RABIES-MODE!

AAARRRR!

SKAAZ! ZAAK! ZAAK!

I GOT HIM, DORIAN! IF HE THINKS HE'S TOO GOOD TO RUN WITH THE WILD BOYS--

--AFTER ALL WE BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER--

--THEN TO HELL WITH HIM!

SKIZZ!

AAHHR

THAT TOOK THE FIGHT OUTTA HIM!

GOOD! NOW PUT HIM TO SLEEP!

WAIT--

--SENSING SOMETHING! WEIRD CHANGE IN THE AIR-- SCENT OF OLDIE!

YEAH, LIKE WE STILL TRUST Y-- HEY!

RUN!!

WHROOM

WHO--?

YOUR SAVIOR. I'VE BEEN *HEARING* ABOUT YOU. THEY SAY YOU ABANDONED YOUR BRUTAL OLD *GANG* WAYS WHEN YOU CAME TO HALO CITY.

SEEMS YOUR BRUTAL OLD *GANG* CHOSE *DIFFERENT*.

HOP *ABOARD*.

AWW, *NO*! OUR *BIKES*!

AND THAT *OLDIE'S* GOT *WULFF*!

HEY, YER *RIGHT*! *WE* SHOULD GET TA PULP 'IM!

NO! HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY FROM *US*! WE'RE HIS *FAMILY*!

HOPE HE FLAYS THAT MUTT ALIVE!

WHO *ARE* YOU? HOW'D YOU RIG THE *AVALANCHE*? WHY'D YOU SAVE *ME*? AND--

SORRY. *THREE ANSWERS* IS ALL YOU GET. I'M MORPHINE SOMERS. *UNCLE* MORPHINE TO YOU.

AND THE AVALANCHE WAS *EASY*. I *TOUCH* THINGS, THEY *CRUMBLE* WITH *AGE*. REALLY *ANNOYS* PEOPLE.

AND AS FOR *WHY* I'D SAVE *YOU*... WELL...

I BELIEVE THAT *CHILDREN* 'RE THE *FUTURE*. TREAT THEM WELL AND THEY WILL *LEAD* THE *WAY*.

A KID LIKE YOU HAS A GOD-GIVEN RIGHT TO A *FULL STOMACH*, THE RIGHT KIND OF *ATTENTION*.

FANTASTIC FOUR 2099 — SPECIAL PREVIEW

So the phone rang. It was Joey Cavalieri, offering me another chance to work on one of his 2099 titles. Joey was one of the first people I knew in this business. I liked him from the start, and I really liked what he was doing with his corner of the Marvel Universe. It would be a blast to be part of it, but I was always too busy. I knew this was going to be another time when I had to say thanks, but no thanks.

"FANTASTIC FOUR 2099." Joey dangled in front of me the only words that could've made me think twice.

"We talking Reed, Ben, Sue and Johnny?"

"We could be."

He would've had to shoot me to keep me away at that point.

FANTASTIC FOUR was one of the first comics I ever read, ever collected. I started with ANNUAL #6 — the birth of Franklin and, coincidentally enough, a wild ride through the Negative Zone. I paid my money every month and read and then re-read as the FF were trapped in Dr. Doom's village, powerless ... as they fought for their lives in the Mole Man's surreal house of horror ... and by the time Ben Grimm was a slave of the Skrulls (*the* comic-book epic of my childhood), I was counting the days between issues. I knew they were right — this was the World's Greatest Comic Magazine. No doubt about it.

It wasn't just the characters — even though the pattern of the brain, the brawn, the babe and the boy has been copied ever since; and I still think Ben Grimm is one of the greatest comic creations of all time — and it wasn't just their powers — although I've always loved the primal, forceful simplicity of the FF's abilities, instantly understandable yet constantly full of amazing surprises and twists.

No, *this* is the coolest thing about the FF: they were just like any other family, except Reed's ham-and-cheese sandwich would give him an idea for anti-gravity shoes; or Johnny would spend his school break searching for a lost civilization; or the nanny they'd get for Franklin would turn out to be a witch. A *good* witch, but still ...

You see, getting super powers *didn't* change the Fantastic Four's lives at all! Remember, they snuck off on a secret space flight *before* they had super-strength or could stretch or turn invisible or flame on. Challenging the unknown was *always* part of their lives. Their powers made things a little more ... colorful, but behind the cosmic razzle-dazzle they were still — and this is Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's stroke of genius — a normal family like yours or mine.

Except *way* cooler.

When they got a pet, it wasn't a dog — it was Dragon Man! When they took a vacation, it wasn't to some lame cabin in the middle of nowhere — it was to Monster Island, or the Negative Zone, or a quick trip through time ...

Maybe, say, to 2099?

The idea really appealed to me. After all, the future isn't what it used to be. 2099 isn't a "problem" that could be solved in four to six issues, and the FF's Heroic Age idealism would be hopelessly out of place in a world much better suited to Doom. 2099 would reduce one of the most technologically advanced teams in the Marvel Universe to out-of-date anachronisms. Finish turning everything on its ear by making them wanted fugitives with no place to go and no one to turn to and I thought we really might have the Fantastic Four as we've never seen them ...

...And as we've always loved them — on the edge, exploring a new world, uncovering something strange or exciting or astonishing every issue.

Something *fantastic*.

I'll tell you, I can hardly wait to see it myself — and I plan to be here for as long as you are.

Karl Kesel